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ABSTRACT

During the school year 1969-70, 30 school districts supplied data for research concerning the relationship of organizational structure of the school system and the teachers as organizational participants. The target population included all K-12 school systems in Illinois with the exception of the Chicago Public Schools. Data were obtained by use of a) personal interviews with superintendents, b) a Principal Information Questionnaire sent to a random sample of 35 teachers, c) staff lists and other printed material provided by the school districts, and d) a review of background studies. Variables affecting the extent to which teachers believe they are able to influence the course of events in the school system include a) the level of academic training of teachers and superintendents, b) teachers' personal characteristics-age, c) prior tenure of the superintendent of the district, d) teachers' responses to the position of authority, and e) the specialization of functions throughout the system. All variables except the level of academic training for teachers are negatively related with teachers' sense of power. The question of the effect of school system bureaucratization and teachers' sense of power remains unresolved; failure to resolve this might indicate bureaucracy must be seen as a unitary rather than a multidimensional concept. (MJM)

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SCHOOL SYSTEM BUREAUCRATIZATION AND TEACHERS' SENSE OF POWER

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Large, bureaucratic, production-oriented economic organizations are sometimes charged with being impersonal, dehumanizing, and unresponsive to the needs of individuals. Employee participants in these organizations are characterized as feeling alienated and personally unfulfilled because of the limitations which emphasis on organizational efficiency places on their free and creative participation in the production processes.

Schools have not escaped these criticisms. References by teachers to the "down-town office," or to the "board office" suggest that they see administrative personnel as removed from the day to day operation of the individual classroom in a particular school. Critics charge schools with being unimaginative, over-administered, bureaucratic, and rigidly organized. However, any social group requires some kind of formal organization if it is to function, even if this is limited to designation of one member to collect dues for the group.[1] Larger groups performing complex functions require more formal structuring than do small groups performing a single, simple operation. School systems are charged with complex functions and thus formal organization of schools becomes inevitable.

Schools are organizations staffed by teachers who possess college or university training and who consider themselves professional rather

than skilled employees. The degree to which teaching can be considered a profession may be open to question; that teachers are seeking to claim professional authority in the operation of schools probably is not.

This leads to the central problem of this research. What is the relationship between the bureaucratization of the organizational structure of school systems and teachers' sense of power, when sense of power is defined as the extent to which teachers believe they are able to influence the course of those events in the school system which hold significance for them?

Issues in Bureaucratization Studies

Four issues emerge in studies of the bureaucratization of organizations in general and of schools in particular. Two of these are conceptual questions and the remaining two are methodological.

The first conceptual issue involves the perceived theoretical dimensions of bureaucracy. Viewing bureaucracy as a unidimensional concept requires a different research design than does viewing bureaucracy as a multidimensional concept. The second conceptual issue concerns identification of the loci of the evidence of bureaucratization in an organization. Bureaucracy can be presumed to reside in the formal organization structure, or in the participant behaviors within the organization, or in both. The selection of either the structural or the behavioral approach has ramifications for the nature of the research undertaken.[2]

The methodological issues are prominent in prior studies of school system bureaucratization. The first of these pertains to the selection of the unit of analysis. A number of alternatives are available, ranging

from the individual teacher, through departments or divisions within a school, through individual schools, and finally to school systems. Selection of the unit of analysis is not without importance. If the research problem is to determine the relationship between the degree of bureaucratization of the structure of school systems and the attitude of teachers in them, one must assume that school systems vary in organizational structure and that these variations are related to the attitudes held by teachers. The structure of school system "x" is related to the attitudes of teachers in "x". Subsequent analysis must be consistent with the reasoning. The identity of "x" district and of the teachers in "x" must be maintained.

The second methodological problem in bureaucratization studies involves measurement tools. How is the degree of bureaucratization of an organization determined? One alternative is to rely on the perceived bureaucratization of structural characteristics, assuming the earlier conceptual question has resulted in the selection of this approach. The other is to go to the structural characteristics themselves for evidence of bureaucratization. If one opts for the first alternative, a further question arises: whose perceptions of the degree of bureaucratization are to be used? Some researchers rely on the perceptions of non-participant observers while other employ the perceptions of organizational participants. Seeking evidence in the structural characteristics themselves avoids the necessity of relying on the perceptions of others.

School Bureaucratization Studies

Study of the bureaucratic structure of schools has been conducted primarily at Washington University in St. Louis and at the University of

Alberta. These and several related studies have been carefully summarized by both Miklos[3] and Punch.[4]

The two Washington University studies were conducted by Moeller[5] and by Hopson.[6] Moeller's work is considered the pioneer effort in the field of school bureaucratization studies, and Hopson's is essentially a replication of the Moeller work. In both, bureaucracy was considered as a unidimensional concept.

To measure the degree of bureaucratization of the twenty school systems in the St. Louis area included in his study, Moeller developed an eight item bureaucracy scale. "Bureaucratic" and "non-bureaucratic" alternatives for each of the eight items were presented side by side. This scale was submitted to a panel of judges, each of whom was to select one of the alternative responses for each of the eight items. A single bureaucratization score was obtained by combining the results obtained from the members of the panel of judges for each school system. Moeller concluded that the eight item scale tapped a "single underlying dimension which presumably is the degree of bureaucratization of a school system."[7]

Examination of both the Moeller and the Hopson studies reaffirms that bureaucracy was considered a unidimensional concept and that the perceptions of non-participant observers were employed to determine the degree of bureaucratization of each school system. The studies were concerned primarily with organization structure. However, while Moeller sought to relate the degree of bureaucratization of school systems and teachers' sense of power, the bulk of his statistical analysis used the teacher rather than the school system as the unit of

analysis. He did obtain a Spearman rank order correlation of .40 when school systems were ranked on both degree of bureaucratization and mean sense of power scores. The remainder of his analysis was based on a high-low dichotomization of school districts on bureaucratization scores. Dichotomization is inconsistent with degree of bureaucratization unless the existence of only two degrees--more than or less than--is acknowledged. The bulk of the analysis in Moeller's work employs the teacher as the unit of analysis and his or her employment in a high or low bureaucratic system is treated as a teacher related variable.

The studies generated at the University of Alberta[8] are based on the work of Hall at Ohio State.[9] Hall investigated the structures of non-school organizations but considered bureaucracy as a multidimensional rather than as a unitary concept. He identified six bureaucratic characteristics of organizations and developed individual scales for each of these. MacKay modified Hall's scales and applied the modifications to the study of the bureaucratic structure of schools.[10] The Hall scales and MacKay's modifications of them were used in nearly all subsequent studies associated with the University of Alberta. All of these tended to view bureaucracy as a multidimensional concept and all used the perceptions of organization participants to measure the degree of bureaucratization.

The present study was originally conceived as a partial replication of the Moeller work, and it does reflect this earlier study in both conceptualization and design to a limited degree. However, the results obtained are contrary to Moeller's and this contrary finding may be the result of several differences in both the conceptions of bureaucracy and in the research methodology employed.

Problem and Conceptual Framework

This research is primarily concerned with the effect which organizational structure of the school system has upon teachers as organizational participants. Specifically, this research seeks to determine the relationship between the degree to which selected structural characteristics of school systems are bureaucratized and the sense of power expressed by teachers within the system.

Weber's classical statement of bureaucracy constitutes the basic theoretical concept of the study. In addition, the literature of professionalism provides the basis for examining the schools as semi-professional, service organizations. Finally, the concept of alienation is incorporated into the theoretical framework. These concepts--bureaucracy, professionalism, and alienation--constitute the essential theoretical framework of the study.

Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy is defined as that form of administrative organization, proposed by Weber, which is designed to achieve efficiency of operation through rationalization of organizational behaviors. Blau and Scott[11] identify five characteristics of bureaucracy: specialization of work, hierarchical authority structure, rules and regulations, emphasis on personal detachment, and employment based on technical qualifications. Other writers list size as a sixth characteristic.[12] Emphasis on personal detachment was deleted from the present study on the grounds that this is essentially a behavior within, rather than a structural characteristic of organizations. Personal detachment relies heavily on rules and regulations and on employment based on technical qualifications for

implementation and as such does not constitute a separate component of organization structure. Therefore, only five structural characteristics are incorporated in the theoretical framework: specialization of work, hierarchical authority structure, rules and regulations, employment based on technical qualifications, and size.

Specialization of work is defined as the manner in which organization tasks are distributed among the various positions as official duties. It can be considered from two dimensions, specialization of functions at the production level, and specialization of functions throughout the system. In school systems, specialization at the production level refers to the manner in which teaching tasks are distributed.[13] The literature of organizations usually considers specialization under the title of division of labor in the performance of production level tasks. Teachers perform these production level tasks in school systems. Specialization has a second dimension in which the total tasks of the organization can be divided in such a manner that particular tasks are performed by specialists. Health and guidance specialists are examples of this dimension of specialization in schools.

Hierarchy of authority is defined as the manner in which the superior-subordinate relationships are formally arranged as positions or offices within the organization. These relationships can be analyzed further from two dimensions, the intensity of the supervisory relationships and the distance between the supervisory levels. The intensity dimension refers to the degree to which the formal arrangement of hierarchical positions permits a potential frequency of subordinate-superordinate contact that permits an approximation of constant supervision of the subordinate by the superordinate. "Span of control" is the term usually

found in the literature when the intensity dimension is considered. Distance in the supervisory relationship refers to the number of supervisory levels that are present, or to the number of successive dispersements of authority that have been determined for the organization. More specifically, the distance dimension can be defined as the degree of removal of personnel at any one hierarchical level from immediate supervision by the superordinate occupying the monocratic position.

The rules and regulations characteristic is defined as the institutionalization of prescribed patterns of behavior within organizations, promulgated either in written form or in ritualistic observance of customary procedures which have developed over time. This construct has two dimensions: rules and regulations governing affiliation, and rules and regulations as extension of the authority structure. In the latter instance they are formulated to insure constancy and predictability in the execution of organizational policies as determined by legitimately positioned authority. In the former, they govern the conditions under which employees affiliate with, advance within, and continue in association with the organization.

Employment based on technical qualifications refers to the application of universalistic, competence-based criteria in the determination of who will perform what role in the organization. These criteria can be employed at two distinct time periods--at the time of initial recruitment and selection, and at the time of subsequent assignment to a particular role within the organization. In school systems, the application of competence-based criteria at the time of selection involves the determination of legal certification, completion of required training, and prior

experience. Application of competence criteria subsequent to employment to determine who merits assignment to a particular role represents the second dimension of the technical qualifications characteristic.

Organization size can be conceptualized in two distinct ways. One emphasizes the number of offices in the organization and the other the amount of the product produced. Size described in terms of the number of offices is a statement of the number of personnel actually employed by the organization to fill the specific offices required in meeting the organization's functions. Size can also be described in terms of the amount or monetary value of the product produced by the organization. In service organizations, such as schools, size becomes a statement of the number of clients served or of the amount of service rendered to clients.

Schools as Semi-Professional, Service Organizations

Bureaucracy provides the organizing theoretical concept of this study. Classification of the schools as semi-professional, service organizations represents the second concept in the theoretical framework.

In this research, school systems are considered to be formal, semi-professional service organizations. They are service organizations as defined by Blau and Scott in that the prime beneficiaries are members of the client group.[14] Service organizations require professional employees to dispense professional services to clients. Professionals possess specialized knowledge and technical skills obtained through a required period of appropriate training. This knowledge and these skills are the bases for their professional authority to make decisions involving the welfare of clients. This introduction of professional

authority is in direct conflict with traditional bureaucratic organization theory in which authority is claimed on the basis of legitimate position occupied in the hierarchical authority structure.

School systems are semi-professional organizations as defined by Etzioni.[15] Professional organizations are those that are established to produce, apply, preserve and communicate knowledge. Etzioni distinguishes between full-fledged and semi-professional organizations with long training periods of five years or more characteristic of the former.

Categorization of the schools as semi-professional, service organizations injects the concept of conflict between professional authority and positional authority into the classical Weberian statement of bureaucracy. Teacher alienation may be dependent upon the extent to which teachers are successful or thwarted in exercising the professional authority which they can claim by right of training and of their service-to-clients role. Bureaucratic structure may be of importance in determining whether positional or professional authority emerges within schools. It is possible that certain bureaucratic structures enhance the exercise of positional authority while others enhance professional authority.

Alienation

The concept of alienation is the third major component of the theoretical framework. Bureaucratic organization is designed to maximize organizational efficiency through rational structuring of organizations. Merton concludes that rational structuring to achieve efficiency may produce dysfunctions which are antithetical to efficient operation.

Reliance on rules and regulations, for example, may produce employee behavior dedicated to upholding the rules rather than to achievement of the organization's functional goals.[16] Another dysfunctional result may be the experience of alienation by employees.

Alienation has an imprecise meaning. Clark defines it as "the degree to which man feels powerless to achieve the role he has determined to be rightfully his in specific conditions."[17] Seeman lists powerlessness as one of the five basic definitions of the concept of alienation and defines powerlessness as "the expectancy or probability held by the individual that his own behavior cannot determine the outcomes or reinforcements he seeks."[18] Moeller used Seeman's definition but, for semantic reasons, considered alienation as a degree of sense of power, or of "the extent to which the teacher believes he is able to influence the course of events in the school system which hold significance for him."[19]

Alienation may develop out of the conflict between professional and positional authority bases in school systems. Increasing the area of decision making which takes place in the upper levels of the hierarchical authority structure decreases the area of decision making available to professional authority. Increasing the exercise of administrative authority over the teaching functions, which require the exercise of professional skills, results in the diminution of the professional authority of the teacher. This may well contribute to teachers' feelings of frustration in meeting the needs of students who constitute the client group. Alienation may be the result of administrative authority exercised in areas which teachers perceive as within their professional roles.

Hypotheses

A number of hypotheses can be developed by integrating the concepts of bureaucratization, semi-professional organization, and alienation. Bureaucratization of some elements of an organization may serve to augment the professional authority base and increase participants' sense of power while other elements may enhance the positional authority base and decrease that sense of power.

Given the role that training, certification, and specialized knowledge play in establishing professional authority, bureaucratization of both the specialization of work and the employment based on technical qualifications characteristics is seen as maximizing professional considerations in schools. On the other hand, rules and regulations and the hierarchy of authority structure are seen as emphasizing positional authority. These considerations lead to the following hypotheses:

1. The structural characteristics of specialization of work and employment based on technical qualifications tend to facilitate the exercise of professional authority in school systems. Therefore, there is a positive relationship between the degree of bureaucratization of these characteristics and teachers' sense of power: the greater the degree of bureaucratization, the greater the sense of power.

2. The structural characteristics of hierarchical authority structure and rules and regulations facilitate the exercise of positional or hierarchical authority. Therefore, there is an inverse relationship between the degree of bureaucratization of these characteristics and teachers' sense of power: the greater the degree of bureaucratization, the smaller the sense of power.

Definition of the Variables

To test the hypothesized relationships, it is necessary to give operational definition to each of the dimensions of the structural

characteristics and to sense of power. These definitions are developed largely from the examination of the literature of organizations.

Dependent variable: sense of power

Moeller defined sense of power as the extent to which the teacher believes he is able to influence the course of events in the school system which hold significance for him. He constructed a six-item Sense of Power Scale which produces a single score measure for teachers' sense of power. In the present study, the mean district score on Moeller's Sense of Power Scale is used as the operational definition of the dependent variable, teachers' sense of power.

Independent structural variables

Structural variables are those developed to measure each of the dimensions of bureaucratic organization previously identified. All variables are reported as the mean scores for each of the districts included in the study.

1. Specialization of functions at the production level: The Index of Division of Labor in Teaching was developed to give operational definition to this organizational structural characteristic. The Index is a five-item scale based on Charter's discussion of division of labor in schools.[20] The extreme of division of labor is typified by that teacher who limits his or her performance of teaching functions to only one area of skill or competence.

2. Specialization of functions throughout the system: This is given operational definition by the Number of Distinct Occupational Titles, a count of the number of titles assigned to certificated personnel, both teachers and administrators, in each of the districts.

3. Hierarchy of authority structure--intensity dimension: This dimension is operationalized by obtaining a weighted sum of two measures: the mean of ratios of teachers to administrators found for each of the schools in the district, and the ratio of building administrators in the district to the total number of teachers in that district.

4. Hierarchy of authority structure--distance dimension: This is the weighted sum of two measures of span of control; that proposed by Blau and Scott[21] and an adaptation of that measure suggested by Blankenship and Miles.[22]

5. Rules and regulations: Based on Weber's emphasis on the role of clerks in maintaining files, two measures for rules and regulations were developed. There was not sufficient justification for assigning these to each of the two dimensions of the structural characteristics.
   a. The Central Office Clerks variable is a ratio statement obtained by dividing the number of clerical personnel assigned to administrative offices above the building principal by the total number of administrative personnel at all administrative offices above, but not including that of building principal.
   b. Clerks to Total Personnel is a decimal figure obtained by dividing the total number of clerical personnel in the school district by the total number of certificated staff, both teaching and administrative.

   Clerks are defined in both variables as non-certificated personnel attached to and performing services in an administrative office but who have no supervisory position in relation to certificated personnel.

6. Employment based on technical qualifications meriting selection: This dimension is given operational definition as the Provisional Certification variable which is a decimal statement obtained by dividing the number of provisionally certificated staff by the total number of certificated personnel, including both teachers and administrators.

7. Employment based on technical qualifications meriting assignment: This is defined as the Utilization of Technically Qualified Personnel variable which is the district mean of all respondents on a three-point scale of degree of teaching within the academic area of college or university preparation.

8. Size--number of offices: This is defined as the number of certificated staff other than administrators employed in each of the districts. (Two other measures, the number of students and the total number of all employees were available but were not used in the data analysis because there was a near perfect correlation between the three measures.)

Independent non-structural variables

In addition, the literature and Moeller's previous study provided a number of other independent variables, none of which were measures of organization structure. These were not developed from the conceptual framework but were included largely to mirror Moeller in additional ways.

Tenure of Superintendent in Position: the number of years that the present superintendent has held that position in the school system.

Prior Tenure of Superintendent in District: the number of years that the present superintendent has been employed in the district in a position other than superintendent.

Total Administrative Experience--Superintendent: the total number of years the superintendent has held administrative positions in any district, with an administrative position defined as a principalship or a higher administrative position.

Tenure of Principals in Position: the mean number of years in which the present building principals have served in that position in their present assignment in the school district.

Principals--Administrative Experience in System: the mean of the total number of years in which present principals have been employed in administrative positions within the school district, with teaching principalships included as administrative positions.

Tenure in District--Principals, Any Position: the mean number of years in which principals have been employed in the present school system in any capacity.

Total Administrative Experience--Principals: the mean total number of years in which the principals have held administrative positions in any school system.

Professional Training--Teachers: the mean level of academic training of teachers in the system.

Experience in System--Teachers: the mean number of years which the teachers have been employed in the system, the present year included.

Professional Training--Superintendent: the level of academic training of the superintendent.

Professional Training--Principals: the mean level of academic training of the principals in each of the systems.

Teachers' Personal Characteristic--Sex: the per cent of the teaching staff who are males.

Teachers' Personal Characteristic--Age: the mean age of teachers in school system.

Teachers' Personal Characteristic--Socio-economic Status: The mean level of socio-economic status background of the teachers in the school system.

Teachers' Personal Characteristic--Marital Status: the per cent of teachers on the staff who are married.

Teachers' Personal Characteristic--Graduate of High School in the District: the per cent of the teaching staff who graduated from a high school in the district in which they are now teaching.

Positions of Authority: the mean score for the district of teachers' responses to the position of authority index developed by Moeller.

Methodology

Data for this study were obtained from thirty legally constituted K-12 school districts in Illinois during the 1969-70 school year. The target population included all K-12 school systems in Illinois with the exception of the Chicago Public Schools. The districts were selected by a random stratified sampling procedure, with size the basis for stratification. The study design called for thirty-two districts to be included in the sample, but participation of two of the districts could not be obtained and there were no districts of comparable size available for substitution.

Data were obtained by use of (1) a personal interview with the superintendent and/or other designated central office personnel, (2) the Principal Information Questionnaire sent to all principals in each of the school districts included in the study, (3) a Teacher Information Questionnaire sent to a random stratified sample of 35 teachers in each of the districts, and (4) staff lists and other printed or duplicated materials provided by the school districts. Principals completed and returned questionnaires for 449 of a total of 455 schools, a rate of return of 98.7 per cent. Teacher Information Questionnaires were received from 954 of a possible total of 1,040 teachers, a return rate of 91.7 per cent.

Results

Neither of the central hypotheses is supported by the data analysis. Only one of the structural variables, the measure of specialization of functions throughout the system, is included in the final regression equation which represents the statistically significant determinants of teachers' sense of power. The direction of the relationship for that variable is negative and opposite the direction hypothesized. The final regression equation is presented in Table 1, below.

The variables included in the final equation which are significantly related to teachers' sense of power are (1) Professional Training--Teachers, (2) Number of Distinct Occupational Titles (the measure of specialization of functions throughout the system dimension), (3) Positions of Authority, (4) Professional Training--Superintendent, (5) Teachers' Personal Characteristic--Age, and (6) Prior Tenure of the Superintendent in the District. With the single exception of the Professional Training--Teachers, all variables in the final equation are negatively related with teachers' sense of power.

Conclusions

The analysis of the results of this study tends to support several basic conclusions. (1) Bureaucratic theory does not appear to be useful in explaining the level of teachers' sense of power in school systems. (2) The categorization of school systems as semi-professional, service organizations seems to have limited utility in explaining teachers' sense of power.

TABLE 1

MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS ON SENSE OF POWER FOR ALL VARIABLES

Variables[a]	Partial R	F	Simple Correlations	RSQ w/Rest of Model	Standardized B*	Regression Error
Training-Teacher	0.598	12.83	0.229	0.269	0.5624	0.1570
Specialization-Throughout System	-0.557	10.34	-0.338	0.257	-0.5007	0.1557
Authority	-0.507	7.96	-0.376	0.032	-0.3850	0.1365
Training-Superintendent	-0.401	4.40	-0.236	0.189	-0.3125	0.1490
Age-Teacher	-0.350	3.21	-0.110	0.203	-0.2695	0.1503
Prior Tenure-Superintendent	-0.335	2.91	-0.156	0.190	-0.2544	0.1492
Multiple R of equation						0.765
Multiple R^2 of equation						0.586
F ratio of equation						5.42[b]
Degrees of freedom						23

[a]All other variables deleted by regression

[b]Significant at .01 level

However, a reservation about the above conclusions is in order. The failure of both bureaucracy and professionalism to explain teachers' sense of power might also be attributed to the selection of the school district rather than the individual school as the unit of analysis. There is a possibility that this choice tended to minimize the differences in the structure of individual schools within a single district. If, as it can be argued, the school as the teachers' work place constitutes the teachers' primary source of perceptions of sense of power, selection of the school district as the unit of analysis may have resulted in the balancing out of the effect of the individual school variations within the district. Teachers' sense of power may vary more from school to school within a system than it does between systems. Selection of the district as the unit of analysis tends to mute these differences.

The results obtained do not permit a degree of speculation as to what does contribute to teachers' sense of power. However, caution should be exercised in this regard for the research was not designed to answer that question but rather to establish the hypothesized relationship between bureaucratization and sense of power.

The question of the effect of school system bureaucratization upon teachers' sense of power is unresolved given the conflicting results obtained in Moeller's and the present study. Failure to substantiate Moeller's findings may be the inevitable result of viewing bureaucracy as a multidimensional rather than as a unitary concept.

FOOTNOTES

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